

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

6

Address Community Facilities Needs

Community facilities and services contribute to the quality of life in, and the character of, Wilton. Anticipating Wilton's community facility needs will allow time and opportunity for meeting those needs in the most efficient and effective manner.

Goal – Ensure that community facilities are located in areas that meet the needs of residents and the Town and that facilities and utilities meet desired levels of service.

Strategies include –

- **Plan for Town Hall Complex needs**
- **Address the needs of other community facilities**
- **Ensure water and sewer policies reflect land use goals**
- **Use technology to make government processes more efficient**



Plan for Town Hall Complex Needs

A number of Town entities currently located at the Town Hall complex have expressed a need for new and / or expanded facilities. These include the Fire Department, Police Department, Department of Public Works, the Wilton Volunteer Ambulance Corps (WVAC) and Town administrative departments.

Gaining public support for upgrading Town governmental facilities can be difficult. In the early 2000s, a Town committee compiled the spatial needs of departments at the Town Hall Complex, looked at potential new locations for departments / facilities at the Town Hall complex and elsewhere in Town, and developed a plan to meet needs. However, Town voters did not approve bonding for the project. Support today may not be much stronger for this undertaking. When provided a list of potential projects that would cost money, 17.5% of residents said that upgrading public safety facilities was a top priority, but only 3.8% selected upgrading Town facilities.

Ideally, improvements and upgrades should be spaced out over time. Because there generally has not been public support to upgrade facilities other than those which residents feel a more direct benefit from (schools, library, recreation facilities), the Town is now in a situation where almost all of its facilities for public safety and general governance need upgrades.

Determining how to address these needs will require careful analysis of options and, most importantly, public support. Ensuring that residents are bought into the facilities planning process from the beginning is critical. It is also important for residents to grasp the value of having Town facilities that instill civic pride, reflect the reputation that a community wishes to put forth, and are up-to-date to meet desired levels of service and to meet evolving State and Federal requirements.

The following summarizes needs outlined by Town entities located at the Town Hall Complex.

Fire Headquarters

The Wilton Fire Department serves most of Wilton (the Georgetown Fire District serves the Georgetown area) and provides mutual assistance to other communities. The Department has 28 full-time firefighters and two administrative personnel. The building is 25 years old.

Current spatial limitations at the headquarters include inadequate and insufficient sleeping space, not enough space overall, and lack of vehicle and equipment storage space (the WVAC currently keeps its ambulances in the station's bays). The Fire Department also expressed a desire for a training facility, preferably on-site so equipment does not have to be transported.

Ensuring that the fire trucks can leave the bays and reach Danbury Road safely is an important consideration if headquarters remains here. A needs study would be necessary to determine adequate square footage and if and how the current site could accommodate the facility.

In terms of communications, no immediate needs were identified since radio communications were recently upgraded. If the Department is expanded, there could be a need for additional repeated frequencies. A new cell tower has addressed wireless gaps in the northern part of Wilton, but other gaps remain.

Community Facilities Map

Wilton, CT

Legend

- Community Facility
- Protected Open Space
- Former Route 7 Right of Way
- Water

Legend

Education

- 1 Miller / Driscoll Schools
- 2 Cider Mill School
- 3 Middlebrook School
- 4 Wilton High School

General

- 5 Comstock Community Center
- 6 Transfer Station
- 7 Town Hall / Public Works Garage

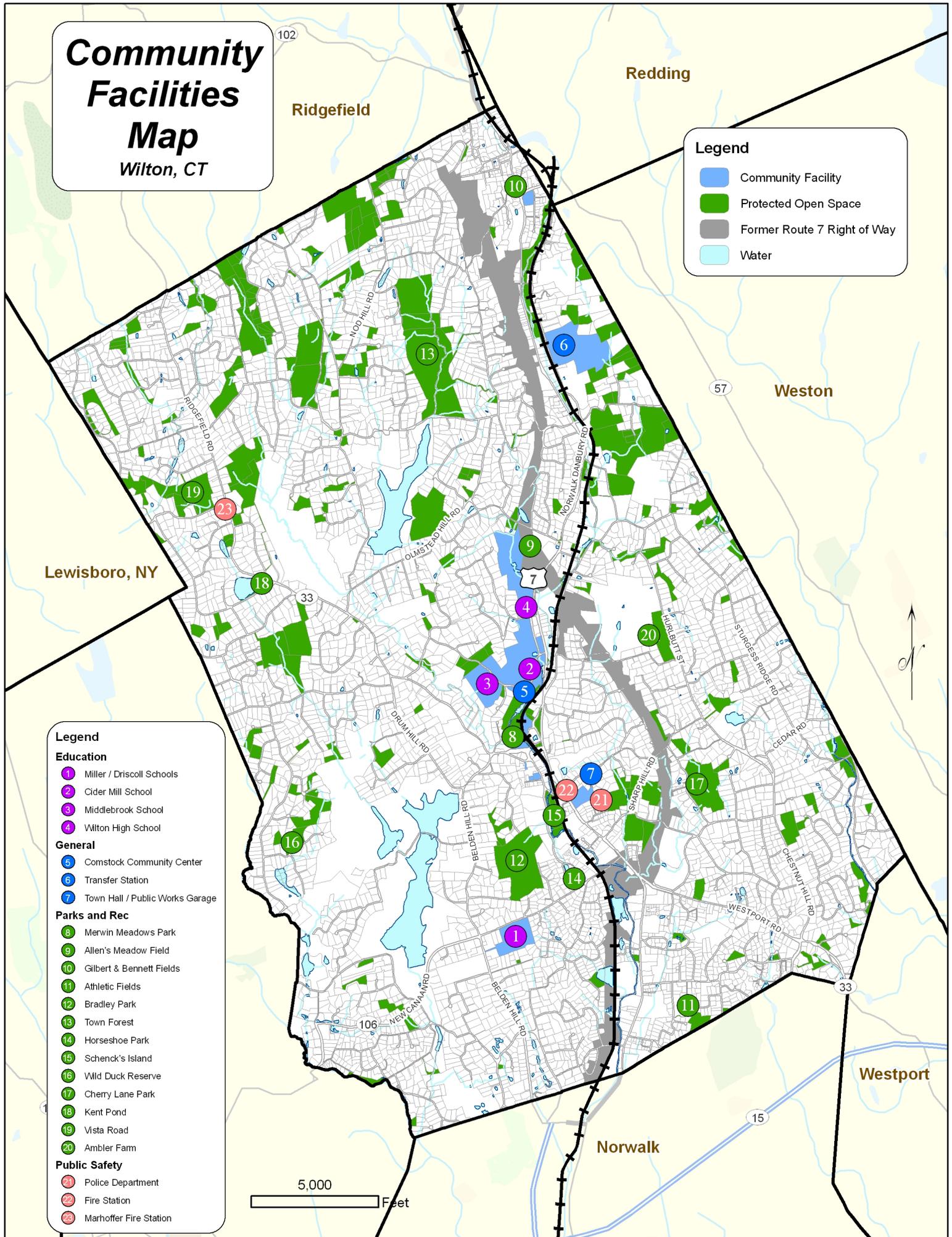
Parks and Rec

- 8 Merwin Meadows Park
- 9 Allen's Meadow Field
- 10 Gilbert & Bennett Fields
- 11 Athletic Fields
- 12 Bradley Park
- 13 Town Forest
- 14 Horseshoe Park
- 15 Schenck's Island
- 16 Wild Duck Reserve
- 17 Cherry Lane Park
- 18 Kent Pond
- 19 Vista Road
- 20 Ambler Farm

Public Safety

- 21 Police Department
- 22 Fire Station
- 23 Marhoffer Fire Station

5,000 Feet



Police Department

The Wilton Police Department is staffed by 44 officers and seven administrative staff (4 full time and 3 part time). Staff has increased by 50% since the station was constructed in 1973. The station provides space for central dispatch, though it is in an awkward location in the reception area. The station also serves as the emergency operations center, which is usually open a few times per year. The Department estimates a potential need for two to five additional officers over the next 10 to 20 years.

Spatial needs to meet current and future needs include:

- Space for everyday functions / office and work space
- Secure impoundment lot
- Juvenile detention area
- Secure area for private meetings and meetings with residents
- Better located space for central dispatch
- Community meeting space
- Training facility

The Department has indicated that they do not feel that its current location is the best location. Being situated at the rear of the Town hall complex requires police cruisers to travel through the Town hall parking areas to reach Danbury Road. Also, because of the number of other uses at the Town Hall complex, there is concern that residents may not have adequate privacy when visiting the police station. They feel they should be located along the Route 7 corridor, however.

Wilton Volunteer Ambulance Corps (WVAC)

The WVAC is comprised of 50 volunteers and two paid staff, enabling them to have two people on duty 24 hours per day. They are housed in a small structure behind and uphill from the police station. Both ambulances are kept in the fire station bays and three other vehicles are housed in a temporary metal shelter.

The Town collects a fee from ambulance users (\$435 per call in 2008) and this fee is placed in a fund for ambulance replacement. Senior housing facilities currently generate 40% of all calls, in large part because the operators of these facilities have a policy that any fall requires an ambulance to be called. While the cost of an ambulance call is recovered through the user fee, an increase in calls could require an additional person to be on duty. As a result, there could be a need for additional volunteers and / or a third paid staff person.

Within the next 10 years, the WVAC has outlined a desire for a facility with adequate and comfortable space for the volunteers and covered vehicle storage space. They do not feel the current facility is adequate long term and the distance and topography separating the volunteers from the vehicles, particularly in winter weather, may create a safety hazard for volunteers. The WVAC would like to be located along the Route 7 corridor. The WVAC estimates a need for 2,500 to 3,000 square feet, with five vehicle bays.

Public Works

Equipment and materials are stored at the Town Hall complex and on roughly two acres of land at Allen's Meadow (owned by the State). A number of Town vehicles are stored outside; though some vehicles can be moved into the maintenance bays over night.

The Director of Public Works indicated that the highest priority is to have indoor vehicle storage space. Keeping Town vehicles indoors, particularly in bad weather, can help extend the life of vehicles. The second priority is to find additional storage space for materials. Additional space will help ensure that should the Allen's Meadow space be lost, the Town has adequate storage space. Having the additional space sooner, while Allen's Meadow is still in use, could allow DPW to stock up on materials, possibly resulting in cost savings.

DPW activities do generate truck traffic, so potential storage locations should be located on roads that are suitable for trucks. Moving DPW storage to another site could free up land to expand those facilities or departments that should stay at the Town Hall complex.

Town Hall and Annex

The Town Hall and Annex house most Town departments and provide a number of meeting rooms. Maintenance problems have been addressed on an as-needed basis to ensure that the space remains functional.

Town officials have indicated that there is a shortage of work and storage space in the Town hall buildings, particularly in the Annex. Departments have also indicated that there is a lack of adequate meeting and training spaces at Town facilities.

Upgrades and a need for additional meeting space may be necessary for Town administrative purposes. If and when other uses at the Town Hall complex relocate, opportunities for Town administration may open up. It would be desirable to keep Town departments on one site or within walking distance to facilitate inter-departmental communication and to provide one-stop services for residents.

The feasibility and desirability of placing Town Hall in the heart of Wilton, in Wilton Center, is also something that might be explored.

Need for Updated Facilities Plan

An updated approach to planning for the Town Hall Complex should carefully consider:

- **Locations of Facilities** – there could be competing needs for particular parcels. In those cases where a department moves to a new location, there could be competing needs for the building left behind. The feasibility to locate Town Hall in Wilton Center could also be explored.
- **Timing** – Not only is timing important in order to manage the capital costs in a given fiscal year, but timing will also be important in those cases where one facility moves, freeing up space for another department to use. The department that is moving must have their facility designed and constructed first.
- **Public Involvement**

Actions to plan for Town Hall Complex needs

1. Take a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the needs of departments presently located at the Town Hall complex. Create a facilities plan that includes an inventory of possible properties, a time-frame, cost estimates, and leasing options.
2. Involve public input throughout the process and include a public education component to build support for the plan.



Address the Needs of Other Community Facilities

Fire Station 2

Fire Station 2 is located at 707 Ridgefield Road in a 50-year old building. Current issues at Station 2 include acidic water that cannot be used for drinking and can corrode equipment, a lack of storage space and need for a larger bay area.

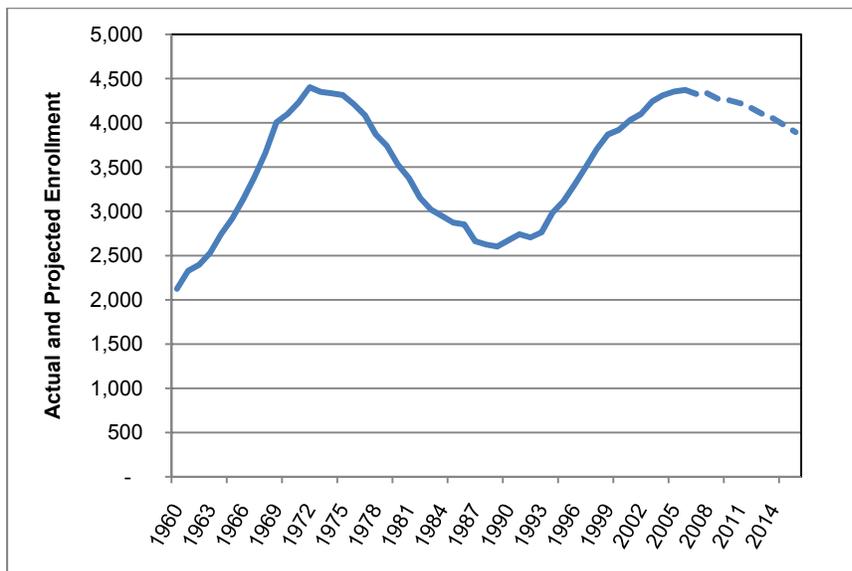
Upgrading or expanding Station 2 will be challenging because the site is small and is nestled in the middle of an established neighborhood. But continued fire protection in the west side of Wilton is critical, so the Town will need to determine if minor upgrades are sufficient or if a new site in this part of Wilton is needed. The costs for acquiring a new site versus upgrades to the current facility should be determined. The Town could also look at options for a multi-town approach to fire protection for this part of Wilton.

Schools

Enrollment data indicates historic patterns of peaks and troughs, with Wilton beginning a trough. A small bubble of students will move through the school system with the bubble reaching the high school by 2014. Comparing school capacities to projections indicates that Wilton should have sufficient space to accommodate expected students through 2016.

Should there be a demographic shift that would result in certain grades seeing unanticipated spikes, Wilton's schools should be able to address the situation without the need for additional buildings. Since schools are community-based rather than neighborhood based, it is easier to address such demographics shifts. It is possible the enrollment could peak again after the planning period for this Plan. Annual projections can help identify when Wilton starts a peak period again.

Actual and Projected Enrollment, Wilton Public Schools



Private Schools

Private schools, located in Wilton and elsewhere, play a vital role in educating Wilton children, at little if any cost to the Town.

According to 2008 data from the CT Department of Education:

- Excluding pre-K, 355 Wilton students attend private school.
- Of those 355, 84 attend a private school in Wilton.

There are three private schools in Wilton: Our Lady of Fatima Regional School, the Montessori School, and the Connecticut Friends School.

Like public schools, private schools can generate some issues related to traffic and parking. The Town and the schools should work together to minimize issues.

Current and Peak Projected Enrollment, Wilton Public Schools

School	Grades	Current Enrollment (2008)	Highest Projected Future Enrollment (Year)	Capacity
Miller Driscoll	K - 2	976	935 (2009)	1,080
Cider Mill	3 - 5	1,050	1,033 (2010)	1,100
Middlebrook	6 - 8	1,010	1,028 (2011)	1,134
Wilton High School	9 - 12	1,298	1,301 (2014)	1,500
Total Enrollment		4,334		

School capacity reported in 2007 Bond Prospectus; projections prepared by Board of Education in 2008.

The Board of Education has identified other needs relevant for this Plan: addressing septic issues at Miller Driscoll, accommodating special needs students at Miller Driscoll and solving parking issues at the High School.

The current septic system at Miller Driscoll is over 40 years old and, according to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has a high nitrogen content. While the system currently functions, solutions may be needed in the short term. DEP recommended building a small treatment facility or extending sewers. If the preferred approach is to build a treatment facility, a challenge will be redesigning the site to accommodate the system, while meeting zoning and public health regulations. If sewers are extended, sewer availability could induce growth in this area. Delineating sewer service areas and, conversely, sewer avoidance areas, as discussed later, would take on added importance.

Over the next two to five years, the Board of Education has identified a need to provide classrooms for special needs pre-kindergarten students at Miller Driscoll. Whether the spatial needs could be met by reconfiguring existing space or through expansion has not yet been determined.

The High School tends to have a parking shortage. Because the site is surrounded by other uses, there is little room for acquiring additional land for parking. The Town should encourage the Board of Education to first reduce the demand for parking spaces and then, if still needed, explore options such as surplus construction staging land along Route 7. Decisions on the long term use of any surplus State property should be made in accordance with a long term facilities plan. Other than these parking needs, other expansions are not planned for the High School (the school was expanded in 2001). Internal updates will be underway in the short term. As for the Cider Mill and Middlebrook Schools, future needs focus on building updates.

Congestion issues at Miller Driscoll are prominent due to parents dropping off and picking up their children. This localized congestion not only creates safety issues and frustrates drivers, but it degrades air quality. At a minimum, parents should be

encouraged to not idle while waiting. Longer term, drop-off and pick-up policies should be examined and bus schedules should be adjusted as needed.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department is housed at the Comstock Community Center and expects to remain there if the center is renovated. Overall, the current Comstock Community Center is a valuable facility that is underutilized.

According to the Parks and Recreation Department, facilities include:

- Merwin Meadows Park - swimming pond, athletic field, picnic facilities, playground, basketball court (17 acres)
- Middlebrook Multi-Purpose Athletic Field (7 acres)
- Post Athletic Field (4 acres)
- Allen's Meadows - Six Athletic Fields (four of the six athletic fields are on State owned property).
- Gilbert and Bennett School - Athletic Field, playground (4 acres)
- Comstock Community Center - indoor recreation facilities, 2 lighted basketball courts, athletic field, 1 baseball field and 1 soccer field (10 acres)
- In addition there are 10 athletic fields, 4 baseball diamonds, 3 softball diamonds, one of which is lighted, Stadium Athletic field, and an all-weather track. The stadium and high school baseball and softball fields are illuminated for night events.
- 12 Tennis Courts, 8 of which are lighted

Desired facilities, identified by the Department include:

- The planned renovation of Comstock Community Center.
- Retention of athletic fields.
- Creation of passive trails and benches at Allen's Meadow. The next step is to fund the design of the trails.
- Finding other passive recreation opportunities, particularly linear parks.
- Addition of an indoor athletic facility.
- Addressing a possible gap in activities offered to "early" seniors.
- Continue to monitor and respond to changes in the types of sports that residents are interested in.

These projects would warrant further study to determine feasibility and priorities. Currently, many recreation needs are met due to careful and cooperative scheduling between Town departments (e.g., Parks and Recreation and the School Department) and agreements with private recreation providers to allow use of their facilities. It is critical that this cooperation continues and additional opportunities are explored, particularly given the lack of land available to build new active recreation facilities.

Some have expressed concerns that there are not enough playing fields in Wilton; 9.8% of residents felt that building more recreation facilities for active recreation should be a top priority.

Gilbert & Bennett School

The Gilbert and Bennett School, located in Georgetown, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a "contributing" building in the Georgetown National Historic District.

The school was built in 1915, in the Beaux Arts Classical Style. According to local historians, the school's modern layout served as a model for future schools. Children from Wilton, Weston and Redding went to the school.

Since closing as a public school, the Town has leased the building to other uses including a private school.

Some residents have expressed a desire for the school and fields to be kept for community use. While this Plan does not take a position on the future use of the building and site, it does recommend that its future use fits the landscape of the area and provides a public benefit.

Social Services

The Social Services Department is located at the Comstock Community Center and expects to remain there if Comstock is renovated. In addition to providing support services for seniors, the Social Services Department also provides youth services.

Spatial needs are expected to be met for Social Services if Comstock is renovated. Should current part-time positions change to full-time positions there may be modest needs for additional office space.

A critical social services program is the provision of transportation to seniors and others that cannot otherwise drive. Three programs are available to Wilton residents:

- Town-to-Town ride service, through the Norwalk Transit District, provides rides for certified disabled residents.
- FISH, a volunteer organization, brings residents to medical appointments in surrounding communities.
- Dial-a-Ride, operated by Parks and Recreation Department, also transports residents.

Given the expected increase in senior population, transportation needs for seniors will likely increase.

The Dial-a-Ride service is stressed and the Town has been unable to find additional drivers. While the Parks and Recreation Department has been able to sufficiently provide this service, over the long term this service should be shifted to Social Services. This would allow data to be kept on the level and types of demands so that services can be adjusted or expanded to best match the needs of Wilton residents. This also would place the program directly under the purview of those with expertise on meeting these types of needs.

There are no programs to bring residents to hospitals outside the region, including veterans hospitals and hospitals in Danbury and Bridgeport. Some fraternal organizations have volunteers that drive residents to these hospitals.

Other communities in the region are exploring programs to better meet the transportation needs of its seniors. It is important for Wilton to continue to participate in regional discussions about solutions and seek cost-effective programs and partnerships to meet these needs.

Library

The Wilton Library, located in Wilton Center, receives 75% of its operating budget from the Town and the remainder is raised from private sources. A library expansion was completed in 2005 and the library now includes a number of meeting rooms that are available to Town entities for free use, to non-profits for a small fee, and to private entities for a standard fee. The library also owns land under the adjacent ABC House; the lease for that land will come up for renewal in 2012.

Spatial needs over the next 10 to 20 years should be met by the recent expansion. Parking demand for larger events are currently met through cooperation with nearby property owners. Continued cooperation for handling parking for larger events is important to reduce the need to convert additional land in Wilton Center to parking.

Longer term, if Georgetown does experience residential growth, ways to better serve that area may be desirable. Another idea raised by the Library Board of Directors is to provide self-serving kiosks at key nodes, such as the train stations.

Emergency Shelters

There are three emergency shelters in Wilton – the Miller / Driscoll school, the YMCA and Wilton High School. Though one (YMCA) is located in the flood plain. If the Comstock Community Center is reconstructed, it is intended to serve as the primary shelter and eliminate the need to use the YMCA. Additional emergency shelter needs have not been identified.

Waste Disposal and Transfer Station

The transfer station (former landfill) on Mather Road is the central facility for the coordination of waste disposal. The Town just entered into a five-year agreement with City Carting of Stamford for solid waste disposal. Solid waste is collected by private haulers, brought to the transfer station and then the Town trucks the waste out of Wilton for compaction and disposal.

Bulky waste can be disposed of at the transfer station; the Town then brings the bulky waste to a facility in Stamford. The Town has offered electronic waste disposal at the Town hall. For recycling, residents can either bring their recycling to the transfer station or hire collectors to pick it up curbside.

The Town also offers household hazard waste drop off dates in Wilton and publicizes collections in nearby communities to facilitate proper disposal of hazardous wastes.

Needs for the transfer station focus on reconfiguring the facility to improve accessibility and to accommodate the new electronic waste program. The site contains extensive wetlands, so the extent of expansion may be limited.

Private Community Facilities

- Wilton YMCA
- The Lake Club
- Four Seasons Racquetball Club
- Rolling Hills Country Club (golf)
- Wilton Riding Club (equestrian)

Non-Profit Cultural Facilities

- Friends of Ambler Farm
- Wilton Historical Society
- Woodcock Nature Center
- Weir Farm
- Wilton Playshop
- Wilton Teen Center

Private “Community” and Cultural Facilities

Often, the private or non-profit sector provides facilities for recreation and cultural amenities that more or less function like a community facility (see sidebar).

These facilities provide services desired by residents and contribute to the quality of life in Town. Wilton is fortunate to have a number of these facilities and should continue to encourage additional private and non-profit entities to help meet demands.

Actions to address other community facility needs:

1. Ensure that Fire Station 2 continues to serve western Wilton; analyze options for meeting expansion needs on-site, on other sites, or by sharing services with neighboring communities.
2. Address the septic system problems at the Miller Driscoll School.
3. Aim to reduce the demand for the parking at the High School.
4. Continue to plan for the accommodation of Pre-K students at Miller Driscoll.
5. Pursue additional passive recreation opportunities, including moving forward with the trails at Allen’s Meadow and the River Walk.
6. Continue coordination between the School Department, Parks and Recreation and private recreation providers to maximize the ability to meet recreation needs with existing facilities.
7. Determine priorities for future recreation facilities.
8. Work regionally to address transportation gaps for seniors and disabled.
9. Move the Dial-a-Ride program to the Social Services Department.
10. Explore the provision of satellite or kiosk-type library services over the long term.
11. Encourage private and non-profit community facilities and cultural facilities.

Ensure Water and Sewer Policies Reflect Land Use Goals

Water supply and sewer service are critical factors in land use planning. The availability of a public water supply and sewers can support greater intensity of growth where a community wants it. Wilton should carefully manage which areas are suitable for growth based on a number of factors, not solely on the presence of utilities.

The Water and Sewer Plan on page 91 indicates the current extent of water and sewer service and for the sewer system, shows areas for sewer avoidance and septic management, as discussed on page 90.

Water Supply

Wilton's surface and ground water resources provide drinking water to Wilton residents and the larger region. Ensuring that the quality and quantity of water resources is protected is of regional importance.

Residents and businesses obtain their water either from private wells or a public system. Residents and businesses that receive their water from a public water system are served by either Aquarion Water Company or the Norwalk Second Taxing District. The Norwalk Second Taxing District owns three reservoirs in Wilton. While Aquarion owns land over the Cannondale aquifer, the water it supplies to Wilton customers originates elsewhere. According to the Norwalk Second Taxing District, in 2007, Wilton customers used just over 85,000 gallons per day. The District's water conservation plan projects expected water use by type of use. The projections account for a 3.5% increase system-wide for commercial and residential uses from 2010 to 2020. The District has indicated that they do not have plans for upgrades, additional service or land acquisitions in Wilton and that they can meet projected demands.

Information provided by Aquarion Water Company indicates that Wilton customers used 620,000 gallons per day in 2005. For water supply planning purposes, Aquarion projects that Wilton's demand will increase to 631,000 gallons per day by 2010, 639,000 by 2020 and 682,000 by 2050. Aquarion expects to have an adequate supply to continue to meet Wilton's projected demand. Therefore, it seems that public water supplies will be adequate to accommodate Wilton's needs over the next 10 years.

The Wilton Water Commission oversees matters related to the water system. When a water line is constructed, the Commission levies a special assessment on properties that benefit from the line.

Water for fighting fires comes from hydrants (where public water lines are available), dry hydrants (fire ponds), or cisterns. It is critical that new development located away from water lines includes water for fire-fighting. The subdivision regulations give the Planning and Zoning Commission the authority to require the construction of fire cisterns.

Protecting Water in Private Wells

Strategies for protecting both the quality and quantity of ground water for private wells were discussed earlier, on pages 29 to 34.

Sewer Service Areas and the State POCD

State law requires that each WPCA delineate which areas of a community are anticipated to be served by sewers and where sewers will be avoided.

CT DEP requires that in order to be eligible for a state grant or loan in excess of \$200,000 for waste water infrastructure purposes, the sewer service area map must be consistent with the State POCD. In general, this means that service areas should not be proposed in areas designated as "conservation," "preservation," or "Rural Lands."

Sewage Disposal

Wilton residents and businesses depend upon private septic systems or public sewers. The Wilton Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) operates the sewer system in Wilton and oversees expansions of the system. The sewer system is gravity operated with the exception of a pump station near the high school for areas further north near Cannondale. The system connects to the Norwalk system and waste water is treated at the Norwalk Waste Water Treatment Plant. The Town's fees to Norwalk are based on plant construction costs, debt service and the volume of effluent.

The City of Norwalk is completing a facilities plan for the treatment plant. Wilton's current allotment is for 500,000 gallons per day of effluent. The facilities plan assumes a future discharge of up to 600,000 gallons per day in the next 20 years.

The City of Norwalk is planning upgrades for the treatment plant. The approach is two-phased, with the first phase involving the construction of a new head house and the second phase focusing on low level nitrogen removal. The City is also developing an industrial pretreatment program which will require certain customers such as food services and industrial uses to remove contaminants from the waste water prior to discharging it to the sewer system. Wilton will be required to enforce the provisions of the program.

The State has a policy requiring sewer expansions to be consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development (see sidebar). The State generally will not approve expansions of sewer systems into "conservation" or "preservation" areas, as identified on the State POCD (see page 111). In addition, local Water Pollution Control Authorities will be required to map existing sewer service areas, areas for planned future service and areas where sewers are to be avoided. Wilton has not yet created these maps but will need to do so.

This Plan can serve as guidance by designating three areas related to sewer planning:

- Currently served by public sewers.
- Septic Management areas where the intent is to continue using private septic systems, but in cases where the extension of sewer systems would support the POCD, extensions may be considered.
- Sewer avoidance areas where sewers should not be extended due to the presence of critical natural resources and a public water supply watershed and due to a desired lower density pattern.

As discussed in the Conservation Chapter, the use of Alternative Treatment Systems could allow an intensity of development not currently viable due to a lack of sewers. Wilton has generally discouraged such facilities in the past and should consider adopting a policy for ATs for the future. Other strategies that can assist with sewer avoidance, such as reducing potential drainage impacts on septic systems, were outlined in the Conservation Chapter.

Water and Sewer Plan

Wilton, CT

102

Ridgefield

Redding

Legend

-  Existing Sewer and Water Service Area
-  Existing Water Service Areas
-  Public Water Supply Watershed Area / Primary Sewer Avoidance Area
-  Other Sewer Avoidance Area / Septic Management Area

See page 31 for aquifers

57

Weston

Lewisboro, NY

33



123

New Canaan

106

124

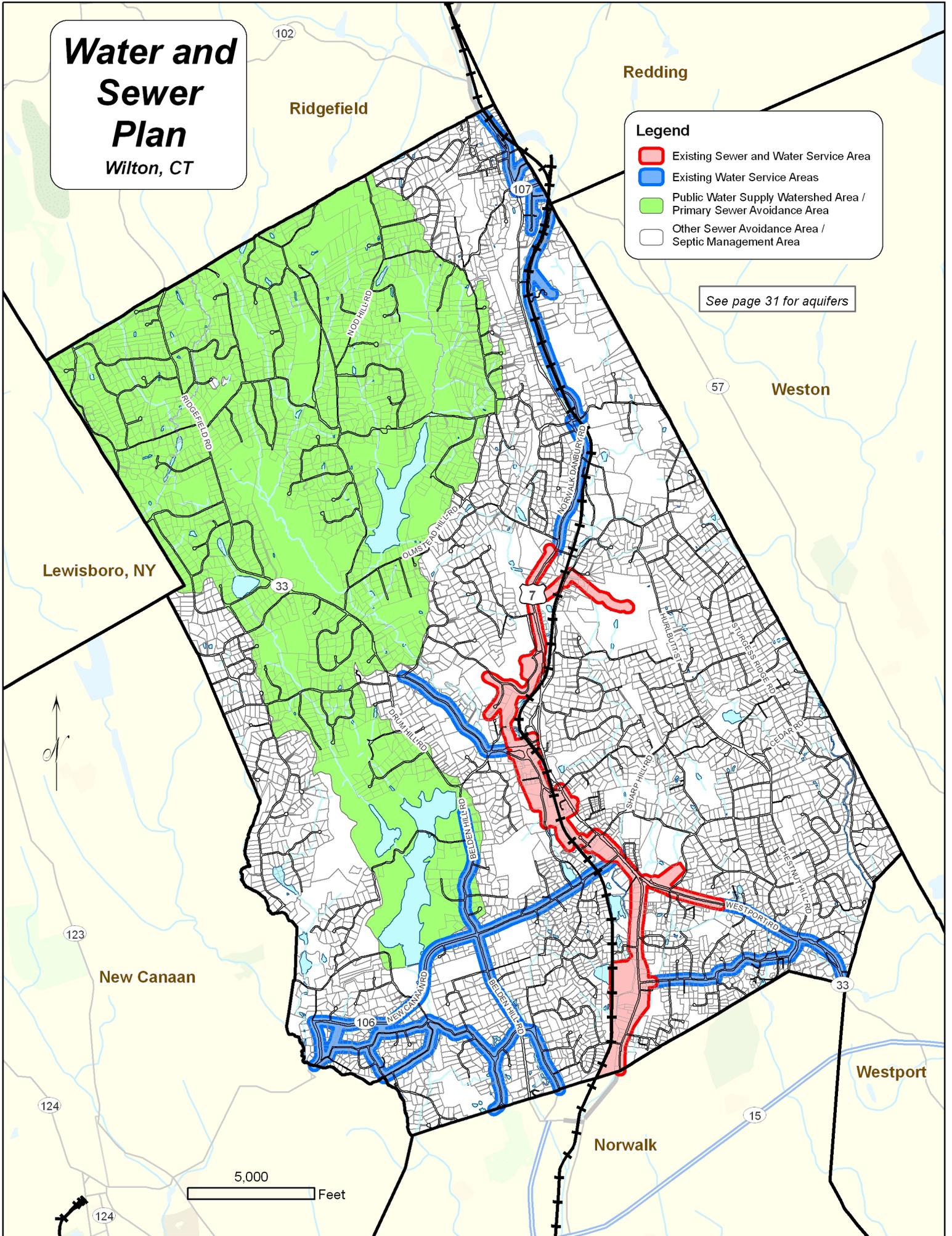
5,000 Feet

Norwalk

15

Westport

124



Actions for ensuring that water and sewer policies reflect land use goals:

1. Ensure that any extensions of sewer or water lines to currently un-served areas are in accordance with the Water and Sewer Plan, unless extensions are addressing a public health issue.
2. Continue to require the provision of fire water cisterns when development cannot be served by public water.
3. Work with the WPCA, especially to coordinate sewer service areas and to create the sewer service maps required by DEP.
4. Encourage the WPCA to request reports from the land use department.

Ensure Other Utilities are Adequate

Drainage Infrastructure

The Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains the Town’s drainage system. According to the DPW, increased storm water runoff from private property impacts the Town’s drainage system. Generally, the system is not designed to handle the levels of flow that sometimes occur.

As discussed in the Conservation Strategies Chapter, reducing runoff from private properties is a critical need in Wilton. A reduction could alleviate the stress placed on the Town’s drainage system and minimize the need to expand or increase drainage pipes.

Energy

Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) provides electricity to Wilton. In 2006, CL&P completed the Bethel-Norwalk 345 kV transmission project which runs through Wilton. In addition, they recently energized the new Wilton substation on Old Danbury Road. The substation is in the process of having additional circuits transferred over and will provide power to a majority of Wilton. This new substation will replace the old Wilton substation, located at the north end of the Wilton Center Station parking lot. According to CL&P, with the completion of the new substation, the Town will have a reliable and sufficient system for the foreseeable future. In terms of aesthetic impacts of the electrical system, the Town should encourage future electrical wires to be buried where feasible.

Yankee Gas provides natural gas to Wilton customers. They indicated that most of their customers are located along Route 7 and along some side streets (detailed information on gas line locations was not available). There has been an overall state-wide trend of more customers switching to natural gas, though specific numbers for Wilton were not available. Yankee Gas does not anticipate expansions of its gas lines in Wilton in the near future. When expansions do occur, they are usually financed by the development /

property owner. In 2007, the company's liquefied natural gas facility in Waterbury came on-line. Yankee Gas does not anticipate supply-side issues in the near future.

As discussed in the Conservation Strategies Chapter, the role of energy conservation is becoming increasingly important in Wilton. The Energy Commission in particular is at the forefront of finding viable solutions for the Town and its residents to reduce its energy use and explore alternative energy sources. It is reasonable to expect energy conservation and alternative energy sources to play a larger role over the next 20 years in Wilton.

Cable Television

Issues related to cable service have not been identified. The Town should encourage cable wires to be buried where feasible.

Telecommunications

Residents and public safety officials have indicated that there are some "dead spots" in Wilton; some dead spots in the northern part of Wilton have been improved with the recent addition of telecommunications towers. As residents, emergency officials, and others become more dependent upon wireless capabilities, ensuring that gaps are filled will be important.

The review and approval of applications for telecommunications towers rests with the Connecticut Siting Council. The Town should consider updating its zoning regulations to address current telecommunications technologies and instead adopt a policy that outlines Wilton's preferred approach to the siting of new facilities and design considerations. Having a policy can provide guidance to the Siting Council should additional facilities be planned in Wilton (see possible siting principles for Wilton on the following pages).

Strategies to ensure other utilities meet needs:

1. Promote infiltration rather than diverting runoff into the Town's drainage system (see Conservation Strategies Chapter).
2. Encourage that gaps in wireless coverage be addressed.
3. Encourage energy conservation and the development and implementation of sustainable energy alternatives (see Conservation Chapter).
4. Adopt telecommunications tower siting principles.
5. Work with telecommunications entities to promote a modern telecommunications network.

Telecommunications Policy Concepts – General Approach

Statement of Purpose

The Town of Wilton recognizes that wireless communication services are an important part of the daily lives of many people. The Town wishes to allow for the availability of adequate wireless communications service in Wilton while striving to find the least obtrusive means of having such services available.

Basic Program

The following policy preferences are intended to provide guidance to wireless telecommunications providers, the Connecticut Siting Council (which regulates the siting of new towers), and the Planning and Zoning Commission in terms of the siting of new wireless telecommunications facilities.

The Town of Wilton intends to carefully review applications for wireless telecommunications facilities (whether to the Connecticut Siting Council or the Planning and Zoning Commission) that may affect the community or its residents. When the Town is notified (as required) of a pending application to the Siting Council for a wireless telecommunications tower, it is the intent of the Town to schedule a public informational meeting where the wireless telecommunications provider can explain the need for and the impact of the proposed wireless telecommunications tower. Based on the input received at this meeting and other information collected, the Town will prepare and provide testimony to the Siting Council for use during the permitting process.

The Town will use the March 11, 2002 *Communications and Tower Committee Final Report and Recommendations* to guide its review.

Policy Concepts – Siting Preferences

General Siting Preferences

The Town of Wilton seeks to encourage or require the siting of wireless telecommunications facilities in ways that will:

- Allow for permitting of locations which are the least visually obtrusive.
- Establish locations least disruptive to the public health, safety, and welfare consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Protect the Town's visual quality and minimize any adverse visual impacts through proper design, siting, and screening.
- Minimize impacts to property values.
- Safeguard the community and minimize potential damage to adjacent properties.
- Minimize the number of towers, especially ground-mounted towers, and instead encourage siting on office buildings or other tall structures such as silos.

- Restrict the height to that needed to establish opportunities for co-location of multiple carriers.
- Provide for the orderly removal of abandoned antennas and towers.

Specific Siting Preferences For Towers

Location

1. Towers should be located to serve areas lacking adequate wireless telecommunication service identified by the Connecticut Siting Council.
2. Applications should evaluate suitable locations already identified by the Town, including Town-owned sites, and larger properties which can allow for more effective screening.
3. Parties wishing to locate towers within Wilton should fly a balloon from the proposed location so that visual impacts may be evaluated from various locations.

Protection of Important Resources

4. The location should preserve the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas including unique wildlife habitats, wetlands, and historic and archaeological resources.
5. A location within or adjacent to any officially designated historic areas including any resource on the National Register of Historic Places should be avoided.
6. There should be no detrimental impact to any scenic area, scenic vista, designated scenic road, ridgeline, or significant geologic or natural features within Wilton, especially those noted in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Design Considerations

7. Tower locations should include an adequate fall zone that will protect public safety. In residential zones, the fall zone should not extend beyond the property's line nor include any residential structures.
8. The use of stealth technologies should be employed whenever possible.
9. Signage and lighting should not be permitted except what is clearly necessary for public safety.
10. Site development of telecommunications facilities should minimize impervious surfaces, avoid soil erosion and runoff problems, maintain natural buffers, provide for security, and provide for safe access.

Use Technology to Make Government Processes More Efficient

While a Plan of Conservation and Development does not traditionally cover strategic town governance issues, increasing the use of technology where appropriate and financially feasible can help reduce spatial needs, reduce overall costs, better inform residents of municipal happenings, facilitate constituent services and ensure that officials have adequate information when making decisions.

Basic principles for integrating technology into local government practices include:

- Posting information on-line:
 - The Town already posts a number of items and recently began uploading videos of board meetings. Additional items could be added, such as mapping, various forms and applications.
- Conducting services on-line:
 - Tax bills, dog licenses, parking tickets, other bills.
- Ensure that the web site meets standards for accessibility and usability.
- Maximizing digital storage to reduce spatial needs:
 - Requiring applications to be submitted digitally.
- Utilizing tools and technology to improve decision-making:
 - Implementing a town-wide, multi-department geographic information system (GIS). A number of departments stressed the importance of having a GIS.

Actions to Increase the use of technology:

1. Develop a strategy to get more information online:
 - Consider a mandate that all departments publish a specified range of information online.
 - Focus on content that supports other goals in this Plan (e.g., the public education).
2. Expand on-line services.
3. Transition to digital storage:
 - Ensure there is adequate capacity and back-up.
 - Require that land use applications, site plans, etc., are submitted in digital format.
4. Implement a town-wide GIS.

Address Transportation Issues

Typically, the main focus of the transportation plan is providing for a safe and efficient vehicular circulation network. However, since Wilton has rail and transit services available, these are also important parts of the Plan.

Often communities tend to focus on transportation as an afterthought to meet the needs of residential and business development. Communities are beginning to see that transportation infrastructure can be used to guide and shape desired growth. This is often most apparent with train stations and the trend toward “transit oriented development”, i.e., placing development in locations served by transit in order to reduce car trips.

Goal – Provide transportation options to meet Wilton’s needs, while minimizing impacts to the environment and Town character.

Strategies include –

- **Address traffic issues**
- **Maintain roads**
- **Promote better transit service and use**



Address Traffic Issues

Wilton's basic road system is in place; the Town is not likely to see any new roads or changes in its overall network (except for the Hubbard Road extension and new subdivision roads). Route 7 carries the most traffic and, due to increases in traffic, is currently being widened. Route 7 is an important regional route and provides access to most of Wilton's commercial areas; that role will not likely change. Managing the condition of roads and the demand placed on roads can help ensure the current network serves the Town's best interests and that road capacity is maintained, thereby minimizing the need for further road widening and helping to address congestion and safety concerns.

Relating land uses to road classification can help ensure that traffic is not generated on roads that are not adequate to handle the traffic. Wilton's zoning regulations limit some higher intensity uses that may be allowed in residential zones to specific roads. The regulations either name which roads certain uses may occur on (e.g., congregate housing may only be located along Danbury Road, Westport Road, River Road or Station Road) or, in the case of churches and schools, limits the location to "major or secondary road as shown on the Town Plan of Development Map." This practice should continue but could be updated and expanded to more uses. The regulations also call for traffic impact analyses for many types of development proposals.

Currently, all of Route 7 is classified as an arterial, as are other roads such as Wolfpit Road, Ridgefield Road, and New Canaan Road. Clearly the widened stretch of Route 7 now plays a much different function than these other "arterial" roads. It may make sense to distinguish between primary and secondary arterials as indicated on the Transportation Plan on p. 99 (see sidebar also).

Access management is critical along the primary and secondary arterials and in denser areas such as Wilton Center. Minimizing the number of access and egress points along a busy roadway can improve safety for both pedestrians and drivers.

There are some intersections currently controlled with a stop sign that seem to be points of congestion. Right now it is difficult to know if the congestion is due to traffic avoiding construction on Route 7. When construction is completed and if congestion is still an issue, the Town should explore simple improvements to improve the functioning of these intersections. Areas of most concern are generally in the southwest part of Wilton, such as Wolfpit Road and Belden Hill Road.

The Town should continue to oppose the construction of the Super 7 expressway through Wilton. The current widening of Route 7 is intended to address congestion. The construction of the Super 7 expressway would impact natural resources and affect neighborhoods. For Wilton, the worst outcome would be the construction of this roadway in addition to the widening that is underway. Instead, the Town supports conducting a long range multi-modal transportation study to identify investments

Traffic Volumes in Wilton

Traffic counts and trends over time are not provided here because volumes and patterns are likely skewed during Route 7 construction as drivers try to avoid construction areas. Once the Route 7 widening is completed, the Town should look at traffic counts to understand how the new roadway influences patterns and overall volumes.

Proposed Road Classification

See Transportation Plan on p. 99.

Primary Arterial – Intended to carry regional traffic and serve major activity centers.

Better able to handle higher traffic generators, with access management.

Secondary Arterial – Intended to carry regional traffic and serve major activity centers, but with less traffic capacity and generally narrower roadway than primary arterials.

Carefully consider appropriateness of higher traffic generators and if development will increase the need to reconstruct / widen the road.

Collector – Collect traffic from local roads and connect with minor and major arterials. Less appropriate for higher traffic generators.

Local – All other roads, with a primary purpose of providing vehicular access to abutting properties and not intended for through-traffic. Not appropriate for high traffic generators.

MetroPool

MetroPool is an organization that works with employers to promote alternative transportation to and from work. They also provide information for commuters on alternative commuting options. Their services to employers and commuters in Fairfield County and a number of counties in New York is free.

See www.metropool.com for more information.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM refers to policies or plans to reduce congestion by promoting:

- Alternative forms of transportation
- Off-peak travel
- Reduction in need to travel (e.g., work from home, mixing land uses to allow trips by foot, etc.)

In some communities, employers are encouraged or required to develop TDM plans that show how they will reduce single-occupant car trips by employees.

required to optimize an effective mix of transportation options for residents and workers in the region.

Reducing the number of single-occupancy trips can help reduce traffic. Approximately, 25 employers in Wilton participate in MetroPool, an entity that helps employers and employees find alternative commute options. New and existing employers particularly along the Route 7 corridor should be encouraged to participate. MetroPool representatives noted the importance of educating employees on commuting options – many employees are unaware of programs.

The Town should consider requiring applicants for commercial site plans and / or special permits to demonstrate that they will promote transit use and alternative modes of transportation (often called “transportation demand management” or TDM, see sidebar). Programs might include ride matching, van pool formation and job site transit ticket sales. The role of the Town as a major employer should not be overlooked, particularly with over 600 positions in the school system alone.

The Town also should encourage employers / developers to integrate some employee services onto sites with offices. Having services on site can reduce the need for employees to drive off-site to run basic errands.

Actions to address traffic issues:

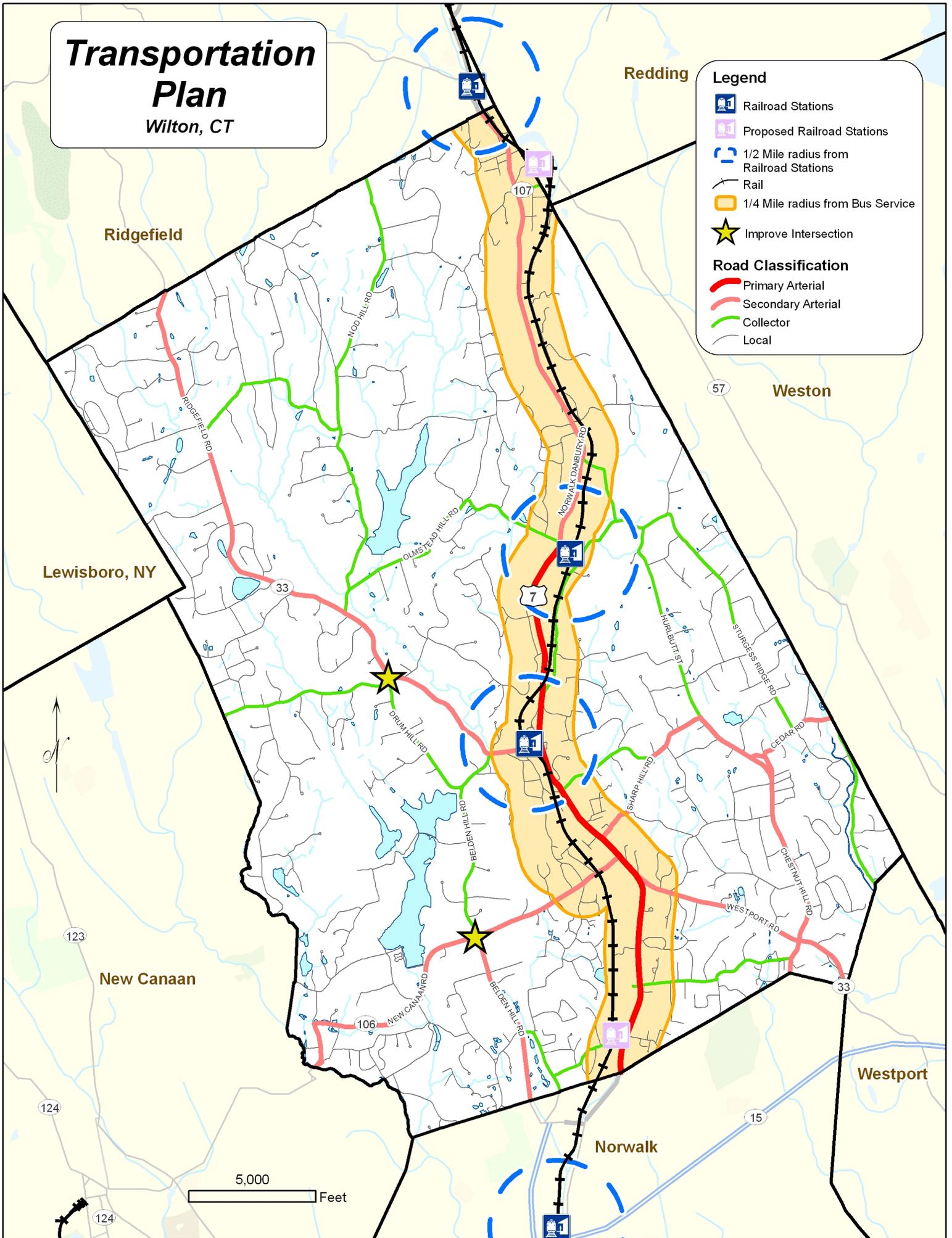
1. Continue to require traffic impact analyses for land uses that have the potential to generate higher traffic volumes.
2. Review zoning regulations to determine for which uses road classification should play a role in location standards. Update the regulations based on findings.
3. Continue to encourage development to incorporate access management provisions, including the reduction and consolidation of curb cuts.
4. Identify congested intersections where minor improvements can alleviate problems.
5. Encourage large employers to implement transportation demand management.
6. Consider incorporating transportation demand management criteria into the site plan approval process.
7. Continue to oppose the construction of a Super 7 Expressway.

Transportation Plan

Wilton, CT

Legend

-  Railroad Stations
 -  Proposed Railroad Stations
 -  1/2 Mile radius from Railroad Stations
 -  Rail
 -  1/4 Mile radius from Bus Service
 -  Improve Intersection
- ### Road Classification
-  Primary Arterial
 -  Secondary Arterial
 -  Collector
 -  Local



GASB 34

Government Accounting Standards Board Statement 34 (GASB 34) created new standards for state and local financial reporting, making financial reports more meaningful.

GASB 34 requires municipalities to account for all capital assets, including buildings, equipment, vehicles, roads, sewers, etc. As municipal assets depreciate, they can impact the community's financial health and ability to bond for future capital improvement projects.

Rather than allow all of these assets to depreciate, municipalities can maintain and even improve the value of major assets such as roads, bridges and sewers through an Asset Management Plan that tracks their condition and schedules regular maintenance to prevent their physical deterioration and premature failure.

Since GASB 34 requires reporting of depreciating assets, it provides an incentive for maintenance.

Maintain Town Roads

The Town is responsible for maintaining 127 miles of roadways. In general, approximately \$600,000 has been budgeted annually for road maintenance. According to the Public Works Department, \$600,000 allows the Town to maintain four to five miles per year. The Town's goal is to address all roads in a 20 year cycle; yet under the current system, it would take at least 25 years. GASB 34, the new accounting standards for municipalities, will increase the visibility of under-funded maintenance (see sidebar).

Developing a system to improve the time line for maintenance is not solely an appropriation issue. Adopting a pavement management system can help a community ensure that it gets the most return for each dollar invested in maintenance. A pavement management system includes ongoing data collection, monitoring and analysis of road conditions. Computer programs allow the testing of scenarios to determine how to improve roads and increase their useful life in the most cost-effective manner. Wilton is the only community in the SWRPA region that has not developed a pavement management system.

New Canaan recently adopted a lower cost program pavement management system that could serve as a model to Wilton.

Actions to maintain roads:

1. Adopt a Pavement Management System to more efficiently program road improvements.

Promote Better Transit Service and Use

Improve Transit Connectivity and Scheduling

Wilton is fortunate to have two train stations with service to Stamford and New York City and bus service. But because these services are run by other entities (MetroNorth and the Norwalk Transit District), the Town cannot directly control scheduling and routes. The Town can, however, continue to work with SWRPA, ConnDOT and the service providers to optimize service to best meet needs.

Residents and commuters will be deterred from using transit if the schedules do not work for them. According to the survey, 29% of Wilton residents do not use transit at all and another 24% use transit, but never in Wilton (most of them use stations in Norwalk and Westport). When asked what could be done to increase their use of the system, most responses centered on the lack of service.

Transit also brings workers to Wilton. Town officials have indicated that current bus connections from train stations to employment destinations in Wilton are not optimal.

MetroPool noted another scheduling gap that it sees in the region. While many teachers in the region (and likely Wilton also) would like to take the train to work, the shuttle / bus schedules from rail stations to schools do not match their schedules. Having shuttles that bring workers to and from the train stations might increase transit ridership.

Implement the Danbury Branch Improvements

Improved rail service could encourage both Wilton residents and those who commute to Wilton for work to take the train. Options to increase service levels are being analyzed, including electrification, dual tracks and other ideas. However, the selected improvements may be years away from implementation. Continued Town support is critical to ensure that the process moves forward as quickly as possible and that funding is allocated to implement improvements. In the meantime, some improvements in scheduling have been made; opportunities for additional interim schedule improvements should be identified.

Support Additional Commuter Train Station Capacity at Kent Road and in Georgetown

Business owners in the lower Route 7 corridor have expressed an interest in reestablishing a train station on Kent Road. Expanding service and capacity in Georgetown to serve the Gilbert-Bennett redevelopment is also under consideration. The Town should support efforts, such as these, to make transit more convenient.

Encourage Employers to Promote Transit Use

Employers should encourage their employees to use alternative forms of transportation to get to and from work. In addition, the Town should consider requiring applicants for commercial site plans and / or special permits to prepare a Transportation Demand Management Plan (refer to page 98 for details).

Address Needs at Station Parking Areas

Both the Cannondale and Wilton Center train station parking lots are owned by the State (ConnDOT) and leased to the Town. The Town's Department of Public Works receives and routes complaints and is charged with general maintenance of parking, lighting, etc., while the Town's Garden Club maintains landscaping and the Police Department provides security. The recent *Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study* examined the management structure of train stations in the State and concluded that "The Town of Wilton does not take a very active role in the operation and maintenance of the two stations, though both are considered important assets to the community." Of the 23 communities included in this report, only a handful of communities had a similar assessment. The report does note that Wilton's stations are maintained to an "operable level".

Ensuring that the station surroundings and parking areas provide a safe and inviting atmosphere is critical to encouraging transit use. The Town may wish to consider restructuring the management of these two stations to ensure their upkeep and improvement are a high priority. The Town should investigate management models

that clearly outline responsibilities and protocols and ensure that commuters know who to contact with suggestions or complaints.

Parking at Cannondale may need to be addressed since the parking lot may be at or near capacity and the recent improvements in scheduling could increase parking demand.

The Town has contemplated establishing a fee system at its parking lots (ConnDOT does not allow communities to differentiate between resident and non-resident commuters). One consideration in implementing a fee based system is determining the point at which commuters would decide to drive or catch the train elsewhere.

Actions to promote better transit service and use:

1. Work with major employers and residents to identify schedule gaps and then work with transit providers to address the gaps.
2. Continue to support the Danbury Branch improvements.
3. Support the reestablishment of a train station on Kent Road and expanded service in Georgetown.
4. Address needs at train station parking lots and take a proactive approach to future improvements.
5. Work with the region, the State and transit providers to improve intermodal connections, particularly connections between train stations, commuter parking lots and major employers.

Improve the Viability of Walking and Biking

Not only do walking and bicycling alleviate the need to drive, but these activities are important from a public health perspective. A community can play an active role in encouraging alternative forms of transportation, such as walking and bicycling. Wilton should continue maintaining and expanding infrastructure and amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Land use policies, such as guiding development to walkable villages and nodes, can help to reduce the dependency on driving. Further providing for a strong pedestrian and bicycle network can also help create the types of development patterns that suit Wilton's character.

Residents' Desire to Walk and Bike

- 65% of residents would like more opportunities to walk to places, rather than drive, in Wilton.
- Almost half would specifically like more opportunities to walk to Wilton Center.
- 58% would like more opportunities to bike to places in Wilton.
- A quarter would like more opportunities to bike to Wilton Center.
- 23% selected "create additional sidewalks, bike trails and pathways" as the top capital priority when given a list of six possible projects. Another 16% specifically chose creating the River Walk.

Goal – Improve the viability of walking and biking in Wilton.

Strategies include –

- **Maintaining the existing network of sidewalks and pathways**
- **Increasing connections between destinations**
- **Providing pedestrian and bicycle amenities**
- **Ensuring that new development incorporates pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly measures**



Wilton is fortunate to have a walkable town center, sidewalks on parts of Route 7, and pathways connecting Wilton Center to recreation fields. But there are gaps.

Pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure could be prioritized in those areas where more people are likely to benefit, such as:

- Connections to Wilton Center and Cannondale from nearby neighborhoods,
- Connections between neighborhoods and Route 7 shopping areas, and
- Connections to Town facilities.

Establishing the River Walk and the pedestrian bridge between the train station and Wilton Center are important priorities. The Town should ensure that signalized intersections in key areas include cross walks and an adequate crossing signal.

Providing bicycle racks at destinations such as Town facilities, Wilton Center and train stations is a necessity if the Town wishes to promote bicycling. Some communities, through zoning, require commercial uses to provide bicycle parking.

Sidewalks and paths should be designed with the pedestrian in mind. For example, along busy roadways with higher speed limits, pedestrians may not feel comfortable walking along a sidewalk if there is little or no separation between the sidewalk and roadway.

Other amenities can encourage more people to walk or bike. The lighting provided along River Road is a good example of making the pedestrian environment attractive, safe and inviting. Areas of visual interest are also more inviting to pedestrians. Visual interest may include store window displays, attractive landscaping and views. Other amenities, such as benches, water fountains, and bicycle parking are also important components of bicycle and pedestrian “infrastructure.” Sidewalks and pathways must be maintained to ensure they are safe and attractive. Cracks, crumbling sidewalks, icy spots, and sandy areas may all deter walking.

During the land use approval process, applicants could be encouraged or required to provide pedestrian and bicycling amenities.

Finally, some communities have undertaken public campaigns and activities to encourage residents to walk and bike. Wilton should consider creating a similar type of program.

Actions to Improve the viability of walking and biking:

1. Design and construct a safe, secure and convenient system for pedestrians and bicyclists. Begin by completing the sidewalk network in high priority areas, such as Wilton Center, at train stations, and near schools and recreation facilities.
2. Ensure sidewalks are maintained and repairs are timely.
3. Work with the State to ensure signalized intersections have adequate pedestrian crossings.
4. Ensure that the site layout for new development is pedestrian-friendly.
5. Provide bike racks and consider requiring the provision of bike racks through zoning.
6. Move forward with the River Walk and other pathways.
7. Ensure that road improvements, upgrades, and expansions consider the needs of all current and potential users including bicyclists and pedestrians.
8. Work with neighboring communities and the region to plan for pedestrian and bicycle improvements.
9. Embark on a public education campaign that encourages walking and bicycling by focusing on the financial, environmental, health and social benefits of non-motorized transportation.



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